

following specimen of official English as she is wrote in our Eastern Empire, not by the average Indian civil servant, but by the too erudite professor of the language:—

"Sir,—I have the honor to report that my office chair has since a long time become quite useless and unfit for me to sit upon. One of the arms is lost, the other one moves about very much, the legs were all moving too, but I got some glue from bazaar and made the equilibrium much more better, so that it was perpendicular. I have been very much brought to the necessity of making this report, as the chair damaged itself more this morning on my seating on it; the rattans all burst within the twinkling of half an eye, and I was within a shorter period of time in a circular form, with my legs touching the top of my desk. I beg to state that my body has received great shock now, and I am rubbing Holloway's ointment to improve the pain. Since I am reporting on office furniture I might also bring to your Honour's notice that the rats in my office are more than troublesome, the new sorting box you had sent me was excavated right through two pigeons hole; if they are allowed to continue in life they certainly will annihilate the office, and I request your favour of sanctioning six annas for a rat trap." The writer was a postal clerk.

GEORGE CADELL.



## Parents' Educational Union.

BY DOROTHEA BEALE, PRINCIPAL OF THE LADIES' COLLEGE, CHELTENHAM.

And glorious Hector took the helmet off,  
And laid it gleaming on the ground, and kissed  
His darling child, and danced him in his arms,  
And spoke in prayer to Zeus and all the gods:  
"Zeus, and ye other gods, oh grant that this  
My child, like me, may grow a champion here—  
As good in strength, and rule with might in Troy,  
That men may say, 'The boy is better far  
Than was his sire.'"

*Trans. by KINGSLEY.*

What right have we teachers in a Parents' Educational Union? Are we so bent on teaching that we cannot be content with the children, but want to gather in parents also?

Ah, no! It is not as teachers and learners that we would meet; but as fellow-workers, as friends, that together we may learn from and with one another, how we may best carry forward that which is the supreme work of woman, and, in dying, leave as witnesses that we have lived, men and women, stronger in body, abler in mind, nobler in character, than we have been—that in each age of the world, the wish of the true man may be fulfilled, and the upward progress of humanity be realised—of which the earliest Scriptures spoke, when they said that man was created in the image of God, that he might grow into His likeness; and of which the latest speak, when they tell of man's comprehending the love of God which passeth knowledge, and of being filled with the fulness of God.

Now what is it that parents and teachers will respectively contribute? Well, I think this will generally be the division of labour. Parents will contribute those minute observations which must precede the recognition of law, and form the basis of



the science of education; teachers will have a more limited experience with each child, but a wider experience of many children, and will furnish rather generalisations. The parents will be cheered in view of temporary failure by the larger experience which has proved the power of education; and the teachers will be cheered by the personal experience which tells them that the "must be" is; and faith will be strengthened and hope quickened, and the sympathy between teacher and child and parent will form a teaching and learning circle from which influences for good will be constantly passing, blessing not only the child, but the teacher, as he echoes the words, "For their sakes I sanctify myself," and there will be, as M. Legouvé has said—*l'éducation des pères par les enfants*.

I will begin by giving the teachers' side of the matter, which, I suppose, I see most clearly, and then ask parents to give us theirs?

Now, where I venture to think many parents are wrong is in this. They regard the child as theirs; they have an ideal for the child, and they think that they have a right to direct the education, and that the teacher is to help them in fashioning the child to *their* ideal.

Now the teacher regards the child as the child of God, as the heir of humanity, as a member of the great social organism. He regards the child rather as the foster child of the particular parent, and he thinks more of the responsibilities than the rights of the parent.

Let me illustrate. A parent brings a child to a doctor for some bodily disorder. The doctor listens to all the parent has to say, and then, out of his own special knowledge and wide experience, prescribes a certain treatment. The parent comes perhaps again and again, telling the result of the treatment, and the doctor profits by the special experience, and between the two, the desired result is brought about.

This is legitimate co-operation.

But suppose a parent were to come and say, "Doctor, my child is short, and I want him to be six feet high at least." The doctor must point out that there are certain unalterable conditions, and decline to stretch the child. He would say, "My object is to co-operate with, not to contravene nature. In endeavouring to make feet preternaturally small, or heads abnormally flat, or human beings with the

waists of wasps, people have done much harm; and we may not, as self-respecting men, to please anybody, do what is not for the good of the patient."

Now in intellectual things the evil done is less apparent, and parents, who would not consent to tight lacing and high heels, do sometimes come to a teacher and say, "I want my child to be a musician," when God has not given to the child the necessary qualities; or, "I don't want my child to be a 'blue,' so she shall not learn mathematics."

I reproach myself for having in earlier years pressed on children a view of filial duty which I now think erroneous, instead of pressing on the parents a view which I shall try to make clear to-day.

A musical father paid for years £20, annually, to have his unmusical and only daughter taught the piano. I pressed upon her that it was her duty to do her best to satisfy his great wish. She laboured diligently, and succeeded in attaining much skill; but the time was worse than wasted for artistic purposes, and some other study might equally have developed that strong sense of duty, that determination to do right, however unpleasant it might be, which has characterised her throughout her life.

I have heard of daughters who have no sufficient home duties, who have reached maturity, and who have a duty to God and their country, who are yet kept in idleness, and forbidden to do that which God and their conscience call upon them to do, by a father who does not realise his responsibilities, who thinks of his children as his own. If it is wrong to try to bend the mind to our ideal, instead of seeking to discover the intellectual gifts, and develop these, far worse is it to try to subject the conscience to our will. Guidance and advice we must always give, and obedience within the limits of what seems right, will be dictated by the conscience of the child; but no error can be more fatal than to teach a child that it is ever right to disobey conscience. I do not mean that the child ought to be allowed to disobey, unless he agrees with the parent, but that he should never be moved to do what seems to him wrong, or to omit doing what he feels to be right. Let us ever have courage to say to our children "Whatsoever He saith unto you, do it." The categorical imperative must be obeyed. It may be that the child is wrong,



but it is by the experience of the mistakes that we have made, that each of us has gained wisdom; and the mistakes of childhood are not irreparable as in later life.

I do think that such an association as ours might do something to solve what is a very pressing question of our time, viz., "What are the relative duties of parents and children?" Certainly, truer views would tend to increase that mutual reverence, which makes tyranny and rebellion alike impossible, and the want of which is, alas, sometimes too evident in the familiar nicknames of the son for the father, and in the arbitrary tones of the parent. It was the work of the prophet of old to "turn the hearts of the fathers to their children, and the children to their fathers"; it is a work which we teachers feel to be of supreme importance to-day. Especially in religious matters have earnest, loving, faithful parents sown sorrow for themselves by forgetting the words, "Call no man your master upon earth," and have often alienated their children from spiritual things, because they have not remembered that in religious faith, as in every faith, there must be—first the blade, then the ear, then the full grain in the ear; because they cannot trust to God the supreme teaching of their child.

I have said that the parent has the more special knowledge that we teachers lack; but is it not true sometimes that relations, because they live side by side, believe that they know one another, and therefore cannot learn to do so? Surely the duty of parents and teachers is defined by the first work given to man by the higher relationship, which is manifested more or less in all living things, but above all in the highest creature, self-conscious man.

Man was set "to dress the garden of this world." He can create nothing; the ideal tree is enfolded in the seed; it is his to plant and water, to dig about and prune it, to graft in the higher life, from kindred stock; not to change the nature which it has received from the "Word of life," but to seek to develop it to the utmost, that it may bear good fruit "after its kind." How can we adequately fulfil our part in the work of education, as workers together with God! That wretched simile of Locke's, which makes the mind a *tabula rasa* and education the writing of characters, is, I suppose, the worst extant. The comparison of Socrates, the sculptor, who thought

of education as of the artist's work, is nearer, but inadequate. The idea exists first, and the artist contemplates that, yet, as he works, the vision becomes clearer, and at times it seems as if the idea were an animated thing,—his own creation, and yet something apart from him. Perhaps it is this feeling, which developed the beautiful myth of Galatea, and Acis is the true educator, rapt in joy and wonder, as the lovely form develops, dream-like, into a beauty at which he marvels—and the soul looks forth from eyes once stony and dead. But Fröbel has better described the work of the true educator as that of a child-gardener; the nature, the needs, of the plant he knows; but its form he cannot foresee, nor the glory of its blossoms, nor the fruit it will bear. It has a life of its own which is ever unfolding some new beauty. As the lover of flowers finds joy in watching the unfolding bloom, and is discovering ever new and unexpected beauties, so does the true educator find an unfailing joy and interest in watching the unfolding character. He does not claim that the work is his; and his joy is to feel that he is not alone, but one of a great company of workers, and that all are together carrying forward the divine purpose, which they see only in part, but which cannot fail,—he cries with the patriot of old—What hath God done!

Do I seem to some to be using high-flown language, which has no reality? The true teacher, inspired with the passion of love for the little ones, will not think so. I can only say with the Great Teacher—"He that hath ears to hear, let him hear."

